



Love INC
Love In the Name of Christ



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VOLUME XXIV ISSUE I

Maybe God Does Love Me After All ...

Amy, our dear friend at **Aldersgate United Methodist Church**, called us first thing one morning to let us know that a very distressed woman had contacted her pleading for help doing housework. She had referred the woman to us, but wanted us to be sure we contacted her as Amy had some concerns.

A few minutes later we did get the call from Rosie*. She was quite distressed, as Amy had said. At first our staff referred her to her own church that has a large pastoral care and outreach ministry. But Rosie called back not ten minutes later, angry at the referral. She said that her church did not care about her and she didn't think God cared about her either! It took some time to get her calmed down enough to tell us her story.

It seems that Rosie had fallen in her home while trying to do some cleaning in her kitchen. She had broken her ankle and couldn't move around in her apartment with her crutches! There were "things" on the floor that she couldn't even bend over to pick up. She just needed someone to help her pick up what was on the

floor in her way.

Fortunately our own office volunteer, Pat Simeon, from **St. Luke's Episcopal Church**, was sitting in the office waiting for her day's assignment. Pat had been with Love INC for the past year and a half, coming on Mondays and Wednesdays to deliver needed food and other items to elderly and shut-in clients or to do whatever is needed.

So, here was our volunteer match. We sent Pat, to Rosie's home and it proved to be a perfect match. Later Rosie called back with great thankfulness. She sensed that perhaps God did care about her after all, a thought that grew as she considered the arrival of such a kindly volunteer! But that is not the end of the story.

Two weeks before this, a wonderful woman of God, Mascarenhas Venegas, had come to our office. "I need to go do something for someone" she said in her lovely European accent. She went on to tell us (and I confess, with the language barrier, I did not completely understand her entire story) that someone had treated her with great unkindness and that she needed to do some-

thing GOOD for someone else so that she did not remain angry with the person who had treated her so poorly.

She said that this was what God wanted her to do when hurt by another person.



"I have to go clean someone's bathroom," she declared! OK – I will find her someone, thought the staff person.

So when Rosie's situation came up, Mascarenhas was contacted and quickly responded that she would go see Rosie and bring her cleaning supplies the very next morning. When we called Rosie back to let her know that help for her had been found, we could hear the tears of thankfulness this time. And we, here at the office, were more than grateful that not one, but TWO loving volunteers were able to reach out to Rosie and demonstrate to her the love of Christ with a hug and tangible assistance.

Mascarenhas wrote in a FACEBOOK message, "Hi Susan ...it was a good visit that I have this morning with Sherry, I want to

send you a list of things she needs for the house maybe I can take the next time. She is very sweet. I try to go very soon. Thank you my dear.” And yes, we did make the referral to Rosie’s own church. We felt she needed some pastoral care as

well.

Are you a retired, even disabled, person with time on your hands like Pat? Can you clean like Mascarenhas and give someone a friendly hug? Would you be willing to go to someone’s house,

make a new friend, and just be available? If so, give us a call and we will give you the opportunity to bring blessing into another’s life. ■

** Names of those served have been changed throughout the newsletter to protect confidentiality.*

Two Major Moves in One Weekend!

The monthly moving adventures usually undertaken by **Calvary Chapel of Charlottesville** and the periodic furniture moves by Mike Basile and his crew from **First United Methodist Church** are typically uneventful. Each is given an itinerary: Go pick up furniture from one address (praying with the donor if appropriate), then take the furniture to another place, pray and minister to that family/person.

But on this particular weekend, each crew was asked to move not just individual, specific items, but a complete household from one address to another. As you might imagine, such requests can be stressful on the Love INC staff, as well as on the moving crews, since so much can go wrong. For example, the quantity of items to be moved may greatly exceed what was expected, or the client may decide at the last minute that she wanted her helpers to take a great quantity of her belongings to a non-existent storage unit. So, in light of the past history of such moves, our staff decided to stay available in the office this time.

As our staff representative presented the situation over the phone, Mike took an audible

“deep breath” before agreeing to take this request. He and his crew of youth from his church and from **Rugby Ave Church of Christ** were to move a woman who had suffered a stroke, was disabled and largely mute — presenting some challenges to the movers.

Once at the client’s residence, the team immediately saw that she had many more items than anticipated. As a result, some items would have to be left at the old apartment. Thankfully, the team was able to move the rest of her belongings to the new apartment in a matter of hours.

The other issue surrounding this request was that the lady had two cats she would not be able to take with her. But God was aware of the situation and He saw to it that a kindly volunteer, who just happened to come to the office to donate some items, needed a cat. She had recently lost her husband and a friend had suggested getting a cat... Indeed, God provides!!



The other move was easier in theory, but proved more difficult. The Calvary Chapel crew was to move an older couple from a damp cold

basement apartment to another living situation. The gentleman had been hospitalized repeatedly from a type of pneumonia that his doctor said was exacerbated by living in such conditions. The wife had worked to find another place and assured everyone that she was “packed and ready” for the move close by.

But when the crew came to the first apartment, no one was home and no one answered the cell phone! The crew thought perhaps the couple was at the new address and went there, but the house number given them did not exist. Chuck sent half his crew home as it was then after 9:30 a.m.

Of course the couple showed up shortly thereafter at the first apartment excited to see their “friends” (Chuck and his crew had been there on another occasion). They were invited in. Chuck then made frantic calls to the Love INC staff. “This place is a mess and I already sent half my guys home! I’m calling them to come back!” Just before 3 p.m. he sent a wrap up text message, “We got it done! We left a little of the small stuff for her to do. They need a kitchen table if you have one. Theirs was damaged before we got there and died during the move.”

Unfortunately the Love INC staff person only got the second bit of that text which read “died during the move.” Obviously, there was an initial alarm to think that the move might have proved too much for the gentleman, but, thank the Lord, it was just their

kitchen table that the move snuffed out! Chuck reported that the gentleman had left before the move even began. He was resting at a friend’s home as he had only been released from the hospital again the previous day. All was well.

We are grateful for these faithful movers, but, at the same time, we would welcome others with a truck, a strong back and the willing hands to help those unable to move themselves. If you are that person, couple or church group wanting to serve others in this way, give us a call. ■

All She Wanted Was a Christmas Tree

For so many of us, the holidays are a stressful time where we deal with the excesses of the season, but for some, holidays are a time to do without. With the intent of aiding just such a needy family, a social worker from the department of Social Services referred Madelynn to Love INC for Thanksgiving dinner assistance. But it was only a week before Thanksgiving, not usually enough time to find a donor.

Although Madelynn needed assistance with rent and utilities once in the past, she had not usually requested help. Furthermore, she had been caring for a special niece, even though she herself suffers from a debilitating and terminal illness. The child’s father died years ago of a heart attack and Madelynn was the only caregiver.

But, the Lord knew all these details and, thankfully, Love INC was able to assist Madelynn because a very generous donor

from **Bingham United Methodist Church** had come forward with enough gift cards to cover everyone left on our list at the time. Madelynn came to the office to pick up the gift card, and we were able to offer her a television as well. It was provided by our friends at **Aldersgate United Methodist Church** and she was very grateful.

A few days after the holiday, Madelynn contacted us again. She asked, “Would you ever have a Christmas tree that we could use? We don’t have a Christmas tree.” You don’t usually hear about extra Christmas trees hanging around at Christmastime, but as God would have it, one of our office volunteers, Phyllis from **First Baptist Church**, had a friend with an unwanted Christmas tree!

We called Madelynn the very next day and she showed up that afternoon for her tree. Our staff included a couple of boxes of decorations and some lights as

well. Madelynn then wrote this letter:

“To Love INC Church of Christ,

“We are truly thankful for what you and Love INC Church of Christ have done for us. The Christmas tree was [a] blessing. When my baby girl came in from school you should have seen her. She was so happy. Her smile was so beautiful to where I no [know] she was happy.”



“Thank you for all you have done for us and we hope everyone has the opportunity to celebrate a very bless[ed] Merry Christmas an[d] a Happy New Year.

“Thank you very much for giving us the wonderful sharing kindness and helpfulness for making Christmas special for my baby girl. A personal thanks from us. God bless all of you and have a Merry Christmas an[d] a Happy New Year.” ■

The Medical Students’ Hands-on Project

One of our social worker friends from Adult Protective Services called us recently regarding Mrs. Morgan, who was residing in subsidized elderly housing. Mrs. Morgan’s whole complex was being treated for bedbugs, the scourge of our

day.

Crippled with orthopedic issues, Mrs. Morgan could not do what the managers had asked of her: strip her bed and open all the storage tubs, wash in hot water and pack her clothing and linens

in heavy black plastic bags the day before the exterminators came. Mrs. Morgan was distraught, first at the very thought of bedbugs, then at being asked to do physical work beyond what she was able. So both she and her social worker called Love

INC.

Several churches were contacted to assist but without any response at all. Then our staff remembered that this was just the sort of situation from which the medical student interns could learn some valuable lessons. So, the connections were made.

The task was a fairly easy one for two energetic pre-med students, and they soon finished and even found time to talk with Mrs. Morgan and learn about her

medical issues — as well as time to do some “extra” housecleaning. Mrs. Morgan was greatly relieved. The terrible task that had loomed over her was complete, and she further appreciated the badly needed company!

During their visit, our energetic medical students were able to glean a few lessons about bed bug eradication, certainly of the trials of aging and, perhaps, even some insights into the particular issues in Mrs. Morgan’s life. But the greatest lesson may have

well been the blessing of serving a needy soul. And actually, that is something that all of us can do!

So, would you reflect once again on how you are using your gifts and talents to serve others — others who may be more needy than you are? Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, who said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’ (Acts 20:35) and that applies to more than your money. ■

So, What’s the Difference?

Recently, we became aware that there may be some misconceptions in our local churches about the role of Love in the Name of Christ. Some individuals seem to think that it is Love INC doing the work of the ministry, with financial donors sending money to support this work. But this is far from what is our true mission.

The **Mission of Love in the Name of Christ** is to mobilize churches from many denominations — and more specifically volunteers from within those churches — to transform lives and communities — one person at a time — in the Name of Christ. Our purpose is to help the Christian volunteer reach out to the hurting of our community.

Since walking up and down neighborhoods knocking on doors and asking, “Are you a poor, needy person?” is not a viable option, Love INC seeks to provide safe, doable opportunities to approach persons in need. By meeting a family’s need, a

door may be opened for a friendship to develop between the needy family and the one trying to assist.

The hallmark of Love INC is the personal, Christ-like relationships that develop between those in need and church volunteers. For example, we encourage our volunteers to personally visit the families that receive holiday meals and to continue that relationship during the year as they are able. Traditional “charity” does not invite personal involvement in the lives of the recipients.

Love in the Name of Christ does not seek or accept government funding so that we are freely able to share the good news of Jesus Christ, to pray in His Name with each other and with those in need and to invite those who call to worship with a local church fitting the person’s preference.

Prayer and Bible Study are integral parts of who we are. As a Love INC volunteer, any Chris-

tian has that same freedom to pray with and to love the clients we serve, to invite them to their own church or small group, or their own family home.

When dealing with financial needs, the Love INC staff does extensive intakes to determine eligibility for funding assistance and to uncover issues that may have led to financial crisis. Many of our clients have made poor financial choices leading to their current problems. The Love INC staff attempts to find other solutions for them rather than asking for a church or government handout.

These may include brainstorming about additional employment, budget counseling, returning rental furniture, finding addiction resources. Often the clients have the answers within them, but need a sounding board to make concrete the ideas in their own minds. We take a good deal of time on these intakes with many additional phone calls to verify information.

The Love INC staff may contact landlords, family members, utility companies, or other agencies and may use the internet to assist in the verifying process. With resources scarce these days, it is our responsibility to ensure that only the truly needy get assistance.

The Love INC staff will also verify client requests with local churches, making sure that church benevolence funding is not duplicated in other churches that may have unknowingly assisted the same person. Love Inc will report back to the referring church the various findings.

Unlike the public referral system for the state of Virginia, Love INC provides individualized referrals to match each local need with locally accessible resources. Complex cases may require multiple referrals and resources and the Love INC staff works to find appropriate agencies and groups to meet each need.

Love INC does not sell any donated goods and gives away all items that come to our office. In giving away material needs, such as furniture, household items, and clothing, we try to follow the example of our Lord in 1 John 3:1: "See what great love the Fa-

ther has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!" We 'lavish' love on those in need by giving them the best possible donations and by giving extra 'special' things as we are able. Love INC models excellence, insisting that all donations be in clean, first-quality condition and that all people are treated with love and respect.

We try to follow Christ's example in all that we say and do and we try to instill this in those who choose to serve, whether it be within our office or as part of the community of churches forming the Love INC network. ■



Student Christian Fellowship Tackles a Move

Lydia, from the **Chi Alpha Christian Fellowship** at the University of Virginia, sent an inquiry wondering what kinds of projects Love INC might have for a group like theirs. Chi Alpha has a close association with **City Church**, the former Charlottesville First Assembly of God.

Our Love INC staff has pretty much the same response for every group that calls: Are you able to provide one or two pickup trucks and a small crew that's able to move furniture? Are you comfortable talking with un-churched folks and perhaps praying or witnessing to them? Well, Chi Alpha was ready for the challenge.

And, in God's wonderful timing, it happened that an elderly couple had just called Love INC for moving assistance. Darlene and her husband needed help because

they were strapped for cash, burdened with the deposit and first month on their new apartment, plus rent on their current place — all on their fixed income. They were able to do the packing themselves but couldn't manage to pay for a truck, nor could they carry heavy items. They had already moved many of the boxes in their small car.

That same week Lydia emailed about having some of the Christian students ready and willing to do some furniture moving. They would be available on a certain Saturday in the morning. Perfect! So, our office sent information about Darlene and her husband to Lydia with directions for getting to both old and new apartments.

Darlene reported the following week that all had gone very well, much better than she and her

husband had anticipated. Four sturdy young men with a pickup truck and an SUV showed up that morning. They worked from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. They were able to move almost everything.



Darlene was very grateful and also said that she would like to cook a meal for the young men. She said that when she told them about her plan to have them over for dinner they "lit up." Her daughter who lives out of town also wanted to send a note of thanks to the organization that moved her parents.

We at Love INC find great joy in matching up Christ's servants with those in need, and then watching God do the heavy lifting! ■



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Return Service Requested

Love INC is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit ministry that links people in need to volunteers from a network of area churches.

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